

Note: Copied from the Roy E. Appleman Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks. Charles E. Shaw, NOK

1st Lieutenant Edward Magill, B/57FA/7 - 31RCT

Personal Letter to Roy E. Appleman, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

PAGE 1

Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Appleman, (AUS Ret.)
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Dear Colonel Appleman:

I recently finished reading your latest book, ESCAPING THE TRAP, which was sent to me by my good friend, Bob Lunney. Congratulations on a job well done. It is by far the best description of the Chosin Reservoir battle that has ever been written. Your work is especially important to Army veterans of that bitter fight on the east side of the reservoir. I had previously read EAST OF CHOSIN. You did a fine job on that book but an ever better job on this one. Your work motivated me to put my own observations on paper.

At the time of the operation, I was assigned to a B Battery, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division ("Baker Battery"). I joined the battery at Camp Crawford, Japan, shortly after the Korean War started. Prior to that time, I had been assigned to Headquarters Battery, 31st Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, at Camp Chitose, Japan. While at Camp Chitose, Hokkaido, I spent most of my time running the post commissary and coaching the football team. I also played a little basketball and baseball. The battalion did not spend much time in the field.

For at least a year prior to the outset of the Korean War, the 57th Field Artillery Battalion was stationed at Camp Crawford, which was also located on the island Hokkaido. Its mission was to provide close fire support for the 31st Infantry Regiment. The battalion was in "Johnsonized" status (referring to then Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, who directed Army units to be operated on reduced TO & E's). There were two firing batteries, Able and Baker, equipped with four 105mm howitzers each. As soon as the Korean War broke out, most of the officers and non-commissioned officers in the 57th Field Artillery, who did not have property accountability, were transferred to the 24th Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry division as fillers.

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman, AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 2

When the 57th Field Artillery moved south to the Yokohama area to prepare for the Inchon landing, each of our firing batteries was issued two more 105mm howitzers. A third firing battery joined the battalion from the 1st Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. It was a 105mm self-propelled unit. It was required to turn its self-propelled 105's and draw truck-drawn 105's, and become Charlie Battery. It did not join the 57th Field Artillery until a few days before it boarded ships for the Inchon invasion. When the 57th Field Artillery embarked at Yokohama, all 18 of its 105mm howitzers were in serviceable condition; its communication equipment was in poor condition; the battalion was under strength and undertrained, and most of the officers and men were barely acquainted with each other. Lieutenant Colonel Roy O. Embry, the battalion commander, had his hands full preparing for a tactical landing at Inchon. Colonel Embry was a fine artilleryman and a superior troop commander, it should be noted that his immediate successor, Robert J. Tolly (page 117), was actually a Lieutenant Colonel at the time of the inlet battle. We had received his promotion a few days before the battalion moved from the Fusen Reservoir. Colonel Tolly probably would have been reassigned if the battalion had not moved so soon after he was promoted.

Given all the limiting circumstances, the 57th Field Artillery performed very well from the time it landed at Inchon through that point in time when it was substantially decimated at the Chosin Reservoir. Therefore, when it was reconstituted, the 57th Field Artillery became one of the most effective light battalions in Korea.

After joining Baker Battery at Camp Crawford, I was sent to Camp McGill in the Yokohama area to attend amphibious warfare school. Perhaps that is because I had some previous experience in naval amphibious operations. At any rate, after completing the course, I went to Camp Zama and participated in Operation "Goldcoast", which involved planning for the Inchon landing. My job was to load the personnel and equipment of the 57th Field Artillery onto the ships that were assigned to carry it. Despite many problems, the battalion was able to unload at Inchon in a timely fashion and perform its assigned mission.

Immediately prior to going to the Chosin Reservoir, Baker Battery was located in the vicinity of the Fusen Reservoir, supporting the 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment. Captain Theodore C. Goss was the battery.....

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)

June 5, 1991

Page No. 3

.....commander. Captain Goss was a career soldier who had come up through the ranks. He had 20 years of service in 1950, much of which was as an enlisted man. The other battery officers were Lieutenants Jim Morrison, Paul Stysinger, Bill Anderson, Ken Tackus, Paul Smithey, and myself. Morrison, Stysinger, Tackus and Anderson were killed during the battle. Lieutenants Morrison, Stysinger, Tackus, Eichorn, Smithey and Anderson were regular Army officers. Lieutenants Tackus and Eichorn were graduates of the USMA, Class of '50. They joined the battalion at Japan. Lieutenant Morrison was a regular Army enlisted man who obtained a commission. Lieutenant Stysinger was commissioned through ROTC. He graduated from Duquesne University in 1949. I don't recall where Lieutenants Smithey and Anderson went to college. Lieutenant Smithey was a Transportation Corps officer who was serving a tour with a combat unit. He later returned to the TC and became a pilot.

As you know, the 3rd Battalion was the first of the 31st Infantry's units to move to the Chosin Reservoir area. Ordinarily, Baker Battery supported the 2nd Battalion. Nonetheless, Able and Baker Batteries were ordered to make the move. Captain Goss suggested that the forward observers make the move with the battery rather than wait for the 3rd Battalion. Consequently, Lieutenants Eichorn, Tackus and Magill went along for the ride. In light of what happened, this turned out to be a good thing for the unit. Lieutenant Morrison was the executive officer. Lieutenants Stysinger, Anderson and Smithey were the other battery officers. At that point in time, that Baker Battery had no more than 60% of its authorized enlisted strength. The 57th Field Artillery had been assigned a large number of untrained Koreans before leaving Japan to bring it up to its authorized paper strength. As you can appreciate, the Koreans' total lack of military training, together with out mutual language problems, limited their use to manual labor.

As has been well documented, the U. S. Army was poorly prepared for the early phases of the Korean War. One of the many practical problems was that the 7th Infantry Division's personnel were not properly clothed for winter operations. They were outfitted with an assortment of parka shells, overcoats, pile-lined jackets, field jackets, sweaters, and the like. The troops either wore shoe packs or boots with overshoes, neither of which were adequate for operations in sub-zero temperatures. Interestingly enough, the division was equipped for cold weather operations while in Japan. But, when the division got ready to go to Korea it was required to turn in all of its winter gear, including.....

PAGE 4

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)

June 5, 1991
Page No. 4

.....skis. Even before going to the Chosin Reservoir area, the division had suffered significant cold-weather casualties. During the afternoon of November 27, 1950, when Baker Battery contacted some 5th Marines while moving into a position east of the Reservoir, I recall thinking that our men looking like a band of gypsies because of their unusual assortment of winter clothes. On the other hand, the Marines were all wearing parkas, trigger-finger mittens and generally more appropriate winter uniforms.

After occupying a non-tactical position in the late afternoon, Baker Battery settled down for the night. Lieutenant Morrison fired registration rounds but there was no other firing. During the early evening, a few Korean refugees passed through our position and indicated that they had seen a large number of soldiers to the north. Nobody took them seriously. The evening of 27/28 was not too bad from our standpoint. We did not know that Item, Love and King Companies and Able Battery were under attack until well after midnight. The first thing that alerted us was the sounds of bugles. Oddly enough, we did not hear much small arms or mortar fire from their positions farther north in the inlet until early in the morning. We received some small arms fire in our position but not a great deal. Initially, the Chinese attacked Item, Love, King Companies, and Able Battery which were north of us and Headquarters Battery which was to our south but bypassed Baker Battery for awhile. At dawn, men from Love, King, Item Companies and Able Battery filtered back into our position. When daylight arrived, we could see that the Chinese had pulled out of the Able Battery position and had not removed or damaged its guns.

We then moved farther north and then moved into position in the inlet next to Able Battery. After the move, all of the 3rd Battalion and its supporting units were within the inlet perimeter. Generally speaking, the Able Battery guns were emplaced on the east side of the perimeter, aimed in a northerly direction, and the Baker Battery guns were located on the west side of the perimeter, aimed in a southerly direction. Each battery was responsible for covering half of the perimeter. Baker Battery's westernmost most gun was close to the railroad track. It was probably not more than 50 feet from Sgt. Branford R. Brown's M-19. (See map 9, page 117.) The guns were not well dug in because of the frozen condition of the ground.

During the night of 27/28 and 28/29, I was primarily concerned with the local defense of the battery. The same situation was true for Lieutenants Eichorn, Tackus.....

PAGE 5

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991

.....and Smithey. Unfortunately, on the night of 28/29, Baker Battery suffered extremely heavy casualties. Lieutenants Morrison and Stysinger were both killed. Lieutenant Anderson was seriously wounded. All the rest, except Capatin Goss, sustained minor wounds and were beginning to have frostbite problems. But they all would function. Captain Goss was unhurt. We lost four chiefs of section and numerous cannonneers. Sergeant Nitze, a chief of section, was decapitated by a mortar round that landed on his helmet. The gun crews were firing all night long. Of necessity, firing battery personnel were standing on top of the ground, servicing their guns. Consequently, they sustained heavy casualties from mortar fire. Mortar shells exploded almost at the instant of impact because of the frozen ground. The explosions caused maximum fragmentation and concussion effect.

During the battle at the inlet, Baker Battery did not operate under battalion control. Almost all of our artillery fire was direct. We were covering the ridge lines and the avenues of ingress into the southern half of the perimeter. At times, our gun tubes were depressed as far as possible and fired so that the shells would ricochet off the frozen ground and obtain maximum fragmentation effect against the advancing Chinese infantry. Fuzes were set at minimum arming range. During the early morning of November 29, Captain Goss turned the battery over to me and, thereafter, I was the "de facto" battery commander. He simply couldn't force himself to fight so he sought safe haven (in a deep ditch). By that time, we were already very short of food, water, artillery shells, small arms ammunition and manpower. There was very little medical assistance available for the wounded, many of whom simply froze to death. We had received some air resupply, but it was spotty at best and a substantial part of the air drop supplies fell into areas controlled by the Chinese.

I was quite surprised when the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, arrived at the inlet on the morning of November 29. Nobody had mentioned to me that there was another infantry battalion in the area. The arrival of this unit was very heartening as we certainly needed the additional troop strength. On page 114, you mentioned that nobody from the 57th Field Artillery saw Col. Alan D. MacLean as he travelled across the ice next to the bridge appraoching the perimeter. Actually, Sergeant Copelan, Sergeant Brown, and I all saw him coming across the ice. We were all standing next to Sgt. Brown's M-19 when we saw him come out onto the ice and move toward the perimeter. He.....

PAGE 6

.....was a large man and we had a clear line of sight. At the time, we did not know who he was and did not learn his identity until later. He was hit several times and staggered, fell and finally was lead off the ice by what appeared to be Chinese soldiers. Some friendly troops on the south side of the bridge were trying to assist Colonel MacLean but were unable to reach him in time. While this was going on, vehicles from the 1st Battalion were running erratically across the inlet bridge at high speed.

At the time Colonel MacLean was crossing the ice toward the perimeter, Baker Battery and the M-16's and M-19's of D Battery, 15th AAA, were heavily engaged trying to contain a Chinese attack from the south. Consequently, these units were not able to direct their attention toward the inlet bridge approach toward the perimeter.

In my opinion, there are two men who have never received proper credit for their contribution to the inlet defense. They are Sergeants Brown, D Battery, 15th AAA Battalion, and Edgar Copelan. Sergeant Brown commanded an M-19 and was especially skilled in directing the fire of its twin (dual) 40's. He was a very courageous and capable NCO who performed exceptionally well during the entire battle. The most impressive thing about him was his calmness and good humor under the most trying of circumstances. Sergeant Copelan was Baker Battery's chief of firing battery. He had prior combat experience during World War II. He was also an outstanding NCO who was thoroughly proficient in the use of the 105's. He played a key role in keeping Baker Battery's guns manned and firing. Like Sergeant Brown, Sergeant Copelan was very calm and good-humored throughout the ordeal. These two men performed magnificently and provided great inspiration for their soldiers. And, they certainly were of immense help to me in operating the firing battery.

The night of 29/30 was not as bad as the previous night. By then, the perimeter defense had been reorganized to incorporate the units of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, which strengthened the perimeter defense. However, the ever-increasing number of casualties was becoming a critical problem. The men were very concerned about being hit because they knew there was a good chance that they would freeze to death if they were immobilized. The remaining medical personnel were close to exhaustion and there were too few supplies. There was no satisfactory cover for the wounded who were unable to ambulate. Truck tarpaulins and supply parachutes were used to cover the.....

PAGE 7

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 7

.....wounded wherever possible. I kept telling Lieutenant Anderson that he would probably be evacuated by helicopter although I knew that was unlikely to ever happen. He was well aware of the situation even though he was critically wounded. Supplies of food, water and ammunition were being rapidly depleted. Remarkably, the troops remained in pretty good spirits, everything considered. What they lacked in unit training and experience, they more than made up for in courage and determination. By November 30 Baker Battery was down to five, later four, guns.

The two helicopter medical evacuation flights that removed a small number of wounded from the inlet on November 29, provided some encouragement to the wounded men. They began telling themselves that other helicopters would come in later and evacuate the most seriously wounded. That, of course, was not to be.

When Major General David G. Barr flew into the position on November 30, his helicopter landed a short distance east of Sgt. Brown's M-19. He was met by a couple of officers who took him to find Lt. Col. Faith. After his meeting with Colonel Faith, he returned to his helicopter and immediately left the inlet. He did not spend any time trying to encourage the troops. In retrospect, General Barr must have decided that the battle was about over for the perimeter defenders and that there was little chance of any of them surviving the engagement. That's the only logical conclusion one can reach as to why the 31st Infantry Rear and the 31st Tank Company were ordered to withdraw from Hudong-ni to Hagaru-ri on the afternoon of November 30. General Barr had to realize that withdrawing those units eliminated any chance the troops at the inlet had of completing the trek to Hagaru-ri as an effective fighting force. Had the tank company and supporting troops remained, the inlet force would have had a much better chance of remaining substantially intact, including the truck column, and successfully making its way to Hagaru-ri.

The fighting was fierce all through the night of 30/1. Baker Battery had a direct field telephone line to the infantry units on the south side of the perimeter that was being manned by Lieutenant Keith E. Sickafoose, 57th Field Artillery, who was directing the fire. "Oh s---! They've broken through again." (Lieutenant Sickafoose was a USMA graduate, class of 49. He survived the battle and was a colonel, assigned to research and development in Washington, D. C. at the time of his death in the early 60's. He died of cancer.) We were.....

PAGE 8

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 8

.....firing direct at minimum firing range. We used up most of our remaining HE shells with point detonating fuzes. By daylight the Chinese had fought their way into the Baker Battery gun position. A group of Chinese infantrymen infiltrated the position by moving along the railroad from the south and were lobbing hand grenades over the embankment. They were killed near the 105's. One Chinese soldier came running toward me as I stood next to a 105. Some of the cannonneers were yelling at me to shoot him but he was wearing a GI field jacket and I thought he was an American. He jumped on me, wrapped his legs around my waist and started hitting me on the helmet with a "potato masher" hand grenade. Fortunately the grenade didn't go off and I killed him with a carbine bayonet that was tucked in my boot. The cannonneers thought it was pretty funny. When daylight came, Baker Battery was in very tough shape. We had almost no ammunition left and only four guns that would shoot. I had three hand grenades, and 22 rounds of carbine ammunition, a carbine bayonet and a carbine that wouldn't fire. Fortunately, the Chinese withdrew shortly after daylight rather than follow-up with one more determined infantry attack which probably would have succeeded in overrunning the position.

The sky was overcast and there was no air cover. We tried to police-up the position, distribute the little ammunition that was left and prepare for the next attack. A section chief, Sergeant Hodge, gave me part of a half of a frozen peach. That was all the food he had left. While we were discussing our predicament, an opening appeared in the overcast and a couple of Corsairs came through providing us with some much-needed air cover.

During mid-morning, word filtered down that we were going to try to break out of the perimeter and proceed to Hagaru-ri. Subsequently, we unloaded all of the trucks that would run. The only items left on the truck were the tarpaulins. Whatever gasoline was available was put into the trucks. When the unloading job was completed, there were 23 trucks that were ready to be loaded with wounded. Throughout the morning we were receiving sporadic mortar fire and automatic weapons fire that was causing numerous additional casualties. I was hit in the legs by mortar fragments. The same round killed two of my NCOs.

We decided to put Sergeant Brown's M-19 at the head of the column. He had no 90mm ammunition left but we thought that the tracked vehicle would be more effective in breaking through obstacles than wheeled vehicles. Everything.....

PAGE 9

.....the men could not carry, such as clothing, equipment, and personal belongings was burned. All unit records and documents that might provide intelligence to the Chinese were also burned. All remaining artillery ammunition was expended and the guns were then destroyed. Most of the available trucks belonged to the 57th Field Artillery and were being driven by its men. Only the wounded who were unable to walk were loaded onto the trucks. We did not move out of the perimeter, however, until we received a specific from Major General Oliver P. Smith over Captain Ed Stamford's TAC radio. I was standing next to the radio when the message came through. That order was received about 1:00 p.m.

After receiving General Smith's order, the column moved out and quickly ran into a Chinese roadblock constructed of logs placed across the road, covered by automatic weapons and small arms fire. At the time, there were four F-51 fighters (Australian) and four Corsairs covering the inlet. Captain Stamford ordered the F-51's to clear the area and instructed the Corsairs to come down and knock out the roadblock which we marked for them. In giving his order, Captain Stamford used rather forceful language which the flyers seemingly took to heart. The first Corsair came down the column, north to south, at tree-top level. The pilot dropped a napalm bomb which landed right on top of Sergeant Brown's M-19. Several members of the M-19 crew, who were aflame, came off the mount screaming. Some of the napalm sprayed off the M-19 to the left of the road and hit some other soldiers. One of the M-19 crew members came directly toward me, aflame. My first reaction was to shoot him (which I couldn't have done as my carbine wouldn't fire). We threw him to the ground and tried to smother the flames. We were able to put the flames out but he was mortally wounded. We then put him on one of the trucks. In the meantime, the remaining Corsairs had neutralized the roadblock. The M-19 was still running and Sergeant Brown somehow got it moving. The napalm incident startled everyone. The troops in the immediate area became disorganized. After some delay, the column started moving again.

Shortly before the truck column moved out, I met Colonel Faith for the first time. He was wearing OD's, a sheepskin vest, and was holding a .45 automatic in his right hand. He ordered me to organize any available unassigned troops for flank protection on the forward, left-hand side of the column, which I did. The column moved out until it came to the first bridge that had been destroyed (map 11, p.....)

PAGE 10

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 10

.....149). During that part of the trip, the column received small arms and automatic weapons fire from the high ground on the left, the marshes on the right and the road in front. We had some air cover. All of the aircraft were Corsairs (F4U's). The only F7F that

appeared over the area was at Hill 1221 much later in the day. It should be emphasized that by this time there was no effective means of communication left. The troops from various units had become so commingled that there was no unit integrity. Consequently, there was no functioning chain of command and the column was moving on its own volition.

When the lead vehicles reached the first knocked-out bridge, and one of the trucks broke through the ice trying to bypass the bridge, the column came to a halt. The troops on the left-hand side of the column fanned out towards several buildings in the valley. They got mixed in with other soldiers. At that point, we were receiving heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from both the north side (Hill 1456) and the south side (Hill 1221) of the stream bed. We were taking heavy casualties. At this point, Lieutenant Tackus was critically wounded. He was shot in the back of the neck by a small-caliber bullet. While trying to help him, I could see the bullet lodged near his cervical spine below the base of his skull. He couldn't move.

I knew that something had to be done to neutralize the machine gun fire that was sweeping the road and bridge from the crest of Hill 1221. About this time, a fairly large body of troops, about a company-sized unit, moved across the valley floor, in a southerly direction, and disappeared from sight to the east of Hill 1221. Somebody said that it was A Company of the 32nd Infantry. I moved up to the ground on the south side of Hill 1221. There were quite a few soldiers huddled in a ditch between the road and the base of the hill. I tried to cajole them, encourage them to do anything possible to get them going so we could attack the Chinese on top of the hill. But, most of them had gone apparently as far as they could go. There was an infantry officer laying on the bottom of the hill that was also trying to rally the soldiers. He was badly wounded, but he moved the troops to move out even though he was unable to get to his feet. At any rate, I did get a few volunteers, perhaps a squad, and organized them for an assault on the hill. One of the men in the group was from Captain Stamford's TACP. He had lost his trigger finger mittens so I gave him my scarf to wrap around his hands so they wouldn't freeze. He was killed later in the day.

PAGE 11

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 11

Frankly, I wasn't sure that I'd ever make it to the top of the hill. I had not slept and had had almost nothing to eat or drink since November 29. Halfway up the hill, I discarded my field overcoat because it was too heavy and restricting. After that, I was wearing a pile liner as an outer garment. Every step forward was a struggle. A Chinese machine gunner on top of the hill fired at me the entire time I was making my way up the hill. My carbine was still wouldn't fire. It was very late in the afternoon when we reached

the top of Hill 1221. Lieutenant Eichorn led another small group of soldiers up to the top from the northwest side of the hill. As soon as we entered the Chinese trenches, an airstrike came in and plastered us. We were worked over with rockets, machine gun fire and napalm. There was one Grumman F7F in the group of four attacking aircraft. That was the only F7F I saw that day. The airstrike finished off most of the remaining soldiers.

Following the airstrike there was no live Chinese left in the immediate area of the crest of Hill 1221, which temporarily eliminated a problem for the truck column. There was still enough daylight to be able to see. I scanned the area through my field glasses from this vantage point. Looking back toward the knocked-out bridge, I saw a company of what appeared to be North Korean soldiers travelling west, parallel to the stream bed, along the base of Hill 1456. I thought that they were North Koreans as they were dressed in grayish-white uniforms. The top part of their uniforms included fur-lined hoods. Their uniforms were not the same as the olive drab quilted uniforms the Chinese were wearing. They also looked larger than Chinese. This group came up behind the truck column, moved along both sides of the trucks, poured gasoline on the wounded men and set fire to them. It was not a very pleasant sight to see. By then, a few of the trucks had bypassed the knocked-out bridge and were stopped along the road on the north side of Hill 1221. The truck column was no longer being effectively defended as far as I could determine. It was obvious that the trucks were not going to make it much further. I could not observe any military activity taking place to the east, west or south of Hill 1221. My view in those directions was blocked to some extent by wooded areas and intermediate masks. Darkness fell.

After reviewing the situation for awhile, I took a couple of men and moved off into a southeasterly direction.....

PAGE 12

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 12

.....and Lieutenant Eichorn took a few men and moved in a more southerly direction. The next time we met was in a hospital in Japan. Before leaving the top of the hill, I took an M1 rifle that would fire, and about ten rounds of ammunition, from a dead soldier. Shortly thereafter, I captured a Chinese soldier. Although I don't speak Chinese, I told him we wanted to go to Hagaru-ri. I put my carbine bayonet in his ribs and he seemed to understand my message. We meandered slowly down the hill and exchanged fire with several different small groups of Chinese along the way. While descending the hill, I couldn't see or hear anything on the east side of the hill. We finally got to the bottom of the hill just west of the second blown bridge. We proceeded south to the area of Hudong-ni and again exchanged fire with several Chinese units. Around Hudong-ni, we proceeded

west and crossed the ice, then moved south and entered the Marine position through a morshy area. While crossing the ice we received rifle and automatic weapons fire from the Chinese on the shore. Luckily, most of their fire was well over our heads.

As we made our way south through the marshy area, I was suddenly challenged by a Marine sentry. I had a short discussion with him while he satisfied himself as to our identity. There were still four of us including the prisoner. It was just before daybreak on 12/2. The Marine came out and led us safely through the minefield. The Marines then took charge of the prisoner and the rest of us were taken to an aid station. Late in the afternoon of 12/2, I was air-evacuated from Hagaru-ri aboard a Royal Hellenic Air Force C47. As the plane lifted off of the airstrip, Chinese machine gunners at the end of the airstrip were firing at it. The starboard wing was hit several times. (My friend, George Rasula, recently identified that aircraft as belonging to flight 13 of the Greek Air Force which was attached to a squadron of the USAF. I have never seen anything written about the operation that mentioned any Greek military personnel in the area.) The plane landed near Hungnam. I was first taken to the hospital ship, USS Consolation, then evacuated to the 172nd Army Hospital in Japan and later transferrd to the 155th Station Hospital in Japan.

In late January 1951 I volunteered to return to Korea. Upon my return, I was assigned to Charlie Battery of the 57th Field Artillery. Initially I was used as a forward observer and later as battery executive officer. I remained in Korea until November, 1951.

PAGE 13

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 13

By the time the breakout from the inlet began, Baker Battery was no longer an effective fighting unit. Its guns had been destroyed and a majority of its personnel had been killed or seriously wounded. Most of the men that were left either drove trucks or were evacuated in them. The remainder were used as fillers in various units. To the best of my knowledge, no more than 11 members of Baker Battery survived the battle. All but Goss were wounded.

In my opinion, the surviving personnel from the units that broke out of the inlet have always been unfairly criticized because of the difficulties they encountered in the vicinity of Hill 1221 and the subsequent loss of the truck column following the breakout. The condition of the units at the time the breakout began on 12/1 has never been properly weighed. For starters, the soldiers were improperly clothed, inadequately trained and their units were significantly under strength. The very heavy casualties that the units had sustained further depleted their strength. The soldiers were suffering from hunger,

dehydration, lack of sleep, long exposure to severe cold, and the psychological effects of prolonged combat. Most of the units' officers and NCO's had been killed or incapacitated. There was little or no unit integrity or communication ability left. Many weapons would no longer function and ammunition was scarce. By that point in time, the troops had little ability for effective fighting left. RCT 31 was simply no longer combat effective. For the most part, these same soldiers had performed splendidly for the first 110 hours of the battle, despite all odds. Yet, they have been unfairly evaluated based on the events that took place during the next seven to nine hours. In retrospect, it was totally unrealistic to expect that the remainder of the inlet force to overcome a determined force built around the many natural obstacles in the immediate vicinity of the Hill 1221. As a matter of fact, it is amazing that so many of them survived to fight another day.

It has always angered me that Generals Almond and Barr did nothing to secure recognition for the soldiers who fought and died on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir. As you probably know, the troops who failed to reach Hagaru-ri never received any unit recognition. Inexplicably, they have never been honored for their units' outstanding efforts. For the most part, Baker Battery's officers, NCO's and men died by their guns. By the time the breakout began, the battle was over for them. They never considered surrendering for a moment. They just fought like elite artillerymen to.....

PAGE 14

Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman AUS (Ret.)
June 5, 1991
Page No. 14

.....the bitter end. For that, they did not even receive a salute.

A good example was my driver, Paul Gustafson, 15 years old. He was thrown out of his house by his father when he was 12 years old. Several of his relatives helped him illegally enlist in the Army and he ultimately found his way to Baker Battery. The other soldiers use to jokingly call him "Pinocchio" because of his long nose. He really couldn't do much of anything well. He talked me into letting him be my driver because nobody else would take him. His minority discharge was finally being processed at the time that Baker Battery went to the Reservoir. Nonetheless, the youngster nobody wanted turned out to be a first class soldier. On the morning of December 1, he was blazing away at the Chinese with his captured Thompson machine gun, when he was cut down. It's unfortunate the two fine generals didn't have the opportunity to personally watch that show. They might even have rated Pinocchio's performance above average.

It has always been my opinion that the Army high command was not very proud of the operation on the east side of the Reservoir. Since that operation provided textbook examples of every conceivable command and staff failure humanly possible, their

reaction was to sweep it under the rug and forget it. And forget it they did! That is precisely why your book is so important. You have finally set the record straight.

This letter turned out to be considerably longer than originally anticipated. As a trial lawyer, however, I've always found that each witness' statement adds new dimensions to our understanding of how events transpired. Hopefully, my observations will provide you some additional insight into some of the events that you have described so well.

With my warmest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

(signature)

EDWARD L. MAGILL

ELM:mma

Letter from Roy E. Appleman addressed to Edward L. Magill in response to Magill letter to Appleman. Dated 15 June, 1991.

PAGE 1

15 June 1991

Edward L. Magill
7211 Southwest 62nd Avenue
Suite 200
Miami, Florida

Dear Mr. Magill,

I have read your letter of June 5 concerning your recollections of the Chosin Reservoir with much interest and thank you for your comments about my book, *Escaping the Trap*, concerning the operation. I wish I had had the benefit of your experiences at the time I was working on the Chosin story. It would have helped me.

I noted you said you, Sgt. Brown and Sgt. Copelan witnessed Col MacLean's crossing the inlet ice at the time standing alongside Sgt. Brown's Dual 40 M19 in the western half of the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry perimeter. I am glad to have that information. At the time I was working on East of Chosin nobody in the Battalion or the Artillery that I communicated with said they had seen MacLean cross the inlet. That had surprised me.

A few of your statements have puzzled me. You say that A & B firing batteries of the 57th Field Artillery had 6 howitzers each, two being added to each in the move to Inchon. Col Embry, the Artillery Battalion Commander, informed me he had 4 howitzers for each A & B at the Chosin. All other informants on that point also told me four.

And on another point, at the beginning of the breakout on 1 December you heard over Capt. Ed Stamford's radio a message to Faith to try to breakout. This you say came about 1:00. Stamford visited me at my home on two occasions while I was working on East of Chosin. I interviewed him in great detail about his actions and he never told me that he received any such message. All the evidence that I was able to collect from other people never mentioned such a message coming to Stamford and given to Faith prior to the breakout. Maj. Curtis said such a message did come to the truck column over an artillery jeep radio and in the clear about midafternoon when the convoy was approaching the first blown bridge. Stamford's radio was not netted to the 1st Marine Division at Hagaru-ri. His only communications was through the Corsair pilots overhead. I stand by my version as given in the books.

And you say the napalm tank landed on Sgt. Brown's M19 vehicle which led the point. It may have looked that way from your position in the convoy but it did not happen.

PAGE 2

Lt. Mortrude of C Co., 1st Battalion, 32nd Inf., who commanded the lead infantry platoon in the breakout, was riding the M19 at the time of the napalm drop. He said the napalm passed overhead and struck on the left-hand side of the road just in front of the M19. Capt. Stamford was behind the M19 directing the strike. He gives similar testimony. And so did Maj. Miller who was up front at the time. The tail end of the napalm splash hit the left front of the M19 and hit perhaps as many as ten American and ROK soldiers who were abreast of the M19 on the left side. The main forward splash of the napalm burst landed squarely among Chinese soldiers causing great destruction.

You played a very active role in the operation, one of which you can be proud and you were fortunate to escape death. Congratulations.

Sincerely yours,
(signature)
Roy E. Appleman

REA/IWA